

In the Claims:

1. A method for generating a highly condensed visual summary of video regions, comprising:
  - determining a dominant group in each of a plurality of video segments;
  - determining a key frame in each of the video segments;
  - defining a germ associated with each dominant group in each of the video segments;
  - laying out the germs on a canvas, each germ associated with a support; and
  - filling in the space of the canvas.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein determining a dominant region includes:
  - determining a group within each of the plurality of video segments having the largest volume.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein defining a germ includes:
  - defining a two dimensional shape that encompasses the projection of the dominant group onto the key frame.
4. The method of claim 3 wherein the two dimensional shape is a rectangle.
5. The method of claim 3 wherein laying out the germs includes:
  - determining a scale factor to be applied to every germ such that the germs are scaled to the maximum size that fits into the canvas.

6. The method of claim 3 wherein laying out the germs includes:  
placing the germs in rows, wherein each row has a height according to the longest germ in the particular row.
7. The method of claim 1 wherein filling in the space of the canvas includes:  
assigning a pixel value of each point in the canvas to the same pixel value in the support associated with the germ closest to each point.
8. The method of claim 7 wherein if the germ closest to the point does not have a support that includes the point, the point is assigned the pixel value of the closest germ with a support that includes the point.
9. The method of claim 7 wherein the point is assigned a background value if no support includes the point.
10. A method for generating a highly condensed visual summary of video regions, comprising:  
determining a germ in each of a plurality of images, the germ containing a region of interest;  
laying out the germs on a canvas, each germ associated with a support; and  
filling in the space of the canvas.
11. The method of claim 1 wherein determining a germ includes:

detecting a face in each of the plurality of images.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein determining a germ includes:  
receiving user input, the user input associated with a part of an image.
13. The method of claim 3 wherein determining a germ includes:  
using an algorithm to determine a salient part of an image.
14. The method of claim 3 wherein laying out the germs includes:  
determining a scale factor to be applied to every germ such that the germs are scaled to the maximum size that fits into the canvas.
15. The method of claim 3 wherein laying out the germs includes:  
placing the germs in rows, wherein each row has a height according to the longest germ in the particular row.
16. The method of claim 1 wherein filling in the space of the canvas includes:  
assigning a pixel value of each point in the canvas to the same pixel value in the support associated with the germ closest to each point.
17. The method of claim 7 wherein if the germ closest to the point does not have a support that includes the point, the point is assigned the pixel value of the closest germ with a support that includes the point.

18. The method of claim 7 wherein the point is assigned a background value if no support includes the point.